

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

LISTING OF CLAIMS IN THE CASE:

The following listing of claims replaces all previous versions.

1-27. (Cancelled)

28. (Currently Amended) A computer-implemented method of processing an electronically placed order that requires valid configuration and approval, said method comprising:

receiving an electronically placed order comprising a first valid product configuration, wherein validity of product configuration is based on rules that change over time;

accepting an approval for the order regardless of whether said order is still a valid configuration if less than a pre-determined period of time has expired between said receiving the order and said approval for the order;

rejecting said order if more than the pre-determined period of time has expired between said receiving the order and the approval and if said first product configuration is invalid due to changes to said rules, wherein said pre-determined time is based on frequency and impact of changes to said rules;

after said accepting said approval, determining that said first product configuration is invalid due to changes to said rules;

after said determining, receiving a second valid product configuration that complies with said rules with said changes; and

maintaining said acceptance of said approval after said receiving the second valid product configuration, wherein processing of said order is completed based on said approval that was received prior to said receiving said second valid configuration.

29. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 28, wherein said accepting the approval comprises accepting said approval at a time when said first product configuration is invalid due to said changes to said rules.

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 28 further comprising altering a parameter specifying said pre-determined period of time.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 28 wherein said pre-determined period of time is based on an expected amount of time for said order to be approved.

33. (Cancelled)

34. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 28 wherein said electronically placed order further comprises fields for required order processing information.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 34 wherein said accepting the approval is conditioned upon determining whether all said required order processing information has been provided.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 35 wherein said accepting the approval is further conditioned upon determining whether all said required order processing information is valid.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 34 wherein said receiving the electronically placed comprises allowing said order to proceed without all said required order processing information.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 28 wherein said receiving the order comprises receiving said order via an Internet.

39-42. (Cancelled)

43. (Currently Amended) A system for automatically processing an electronically placed order, comprising:

means for receiving an electronically placed order comprising a first valid product configuration, wherein validity of product configuration is based on rules that change over time;

means for accepting an approval for the order regardless of whether said order is still a valid configuration if less than a pre-determined period of time has expired between said receiving the order and said approval for the order;

means to reject said order if more than the pre-determined period of time has expired between said receiving the order and the approval and if said first product configuration is invalid due to changes to said rules, wherein said pre-determined time is based on frequency and impact of changes to said rules;

means for determining that said first product configuration is invalid due to changes to said rules after said accepting said approval;

means for receiving a second valid product configuration that complies with said rules with said changes after said determining; and

means for maintaining said acceptance of said approval after said receiving the second valid product configuration, wherein processing of said order is completed based on said approval that was received prior to said receiving said second valid configuration.

44. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 43, wherein said means for accepting the approval comprises means for accepting said approval at a

time when said first product configuration is invalid due to said changes to said rules.

45. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 43, further comprising means for rejecting said order if more than the pre-determined period of time has expired between said receiving the order and the approval and if said first product configuration is invalid due to changes to said rules.

46. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 43, further comprising means for altering a parameter specifying said pre-determined period of time.

47. (New) A system for expediting electronically placed orders, said system comprising:

an electronic procurement node that is operable to execute an electronic procurement application; and

a vendor web site that is operable to execute a vendor ordering application;

wherein said electronic procurement node is further operable to electronically transfer a customer to said vendor web site responsive to customer selection of said vendor web site;

wherein said vendor web site is further operable to allow order creation by said customer of an incomplete order lacking required order

processing information and to electronically transfer said incomplete order to said electronic procurement application provided a product configuration in said incomplete order is valid; and

wherein said vendor web site is further operable to receive said required order processing information and purchase order approval at a time after said order creation and to accept the order and continue processing said order without re-checking the product configuration provided that less than a pre-determined period of time has passed between said order creation and said order approval.

48. (New) A system as recited in Claim 47, wherein said vendor web site is further operable to authenticate the customer by a process comprising verifying an electronic procurement web site associated with said electronic procurement application.

49. (New) A system as recited in Claim 47, wherein said vendor web site is further operable to authenticate the customer by a process comprising verifying an identification associated with a company for which said customer is placing said order.

50. (New) A system as recited in Claim 49, wherein said identification associated with the company comprises a Dun and Bradstreet identification.

51. (New) A system as recited in Claim 47, wherein said electronic procurement node comprises an electronic procurement web site.

52. (New) A system as recited in Claim 47, wherein said electronic procurement node comprises a desktop computer.